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RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0456
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0435
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0434
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0416
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000493

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DS/IP/AF, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/OSAC
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON
OSLO FOR HELENA SCHRADER
DOE FOR GPERSON, CAROLYN GAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR FLISER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: POLITICAL INSIDER ON NIGER DELTA & EFCC

REF: A. LAGOS 485

[1](#)B. 06 LAGOS 1419
[1](#)C. LAGOS 134

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Classified By: Ambassador Donald McConnell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On July 1, Oronto Douglas, human rights lawyer and confidant of Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, said Jonathan will continue to meet with Delta and Bayelsa state militants throughout July in order to gain community input on how to improve the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is an incubator for politicians who use the Commission's ample funds to enrich themselves. President Yar'Adua told two former Niger Delta state governors to undergo Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) investigations before he would consider nominating them for ministerial appointments. End Summary.

GON Meeting Niger Delta Indigenes & Militants

[1](#)2. (C) Since early June, Vice President Goodluck Jonathan has been informally meeting with Niger Delta militants from Delta and Bayelsa states (Ref A), vice presidential advisor and human rights lawyer Oronto Douglas told Poloff on July 1.

However, Jonathan's June 28 visit to militant leader Tom Polo's Camp 5 in Delta State was the first of such meetings to be publicized, according to Douglas. Jonathan is now interested in meeting with "the guy in South Africa," whom Douglas said is also known to be an arms dealer (whom we believe to be Henry Okah (Ref B)), to determine what government can do to limit his activities. Douglas said the GON was not interested in the arms dealer's motivations for disrupting the region, but that Jonathan wants to gain insight on how to stop him. When asked whether criminal/militant elements based in Rivers State would participate in these talks, Douglas admitted these individuals were not interested in coming to the table and would be difficult to deal with. Douglas said the Vice President would continue to meet militant leaders through July and predicted that thereafter the government would be able to focus on "ways forward."

13. (C) Douglas said he is continuing his efforts on behalf of human rights and environmental issues throughout the Delta. Beginning in August, Douglas will hold three conferences in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states under the aegis of his law firm, the Community Defense Law Foundation (CDLF), to draw attention to the issues and goals of Niger Delta indigenes as outlined in his Niger Delta Manifesto (Ref C). Douglas expects the recommendations reached during the conferences to be given to the GON. Douglas was hopeful these suggestions would be discussed during a "summit on the Niger Delta" which the GON plans to hold on the Niger Delta in August or September.

NDDC Is Incubator for Politicians Not Development

14. (C) The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is an
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incubator for political hopefuls, not for development, Douglas said. Individuals get appointed to the NDDC to "earn money" for expensive political campaigns and aspirations. Therefore the funds going into the NDDC have not been used to develop the Niger Delta and, Douglas lamented, the Commission will likely remain this way due to political pressure from those currently benefiting, as well as from those who hope to benefit, from positions on the NDDC board. Douglas thinks President Yar'Adua would need to offer very compelling reasons to be able to dissolve or restructure the NDDC, and was not certain Yar'Adua either could or would undertake such measures.

Yar'Adua Uses EFCC to Distance Corrupt Governors From GON

15. (C) While Douglas accused President Obasanjo of using the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for political gain, he would not predict how much independence Yar'Adua would give the Commission. Douglas said the GON and EFCC are jointly working to determine how to handle former jailed governor of Bayelsa State Diepreye Alamieyeseigha's case while he receives medical attention in Dubai. Douglas said the GON is caught between the need to prosecute Alamieyeseigha for money laundering and his popularity within the Niger Delta. Douglas said that many indigenes view Alamieyeseigha as less corrupt than former governors James Ibori, Peter Odili and Victor Attah from neighboring oil-producing states and see his prosecution as politically motivated.

16. (C) The former governors of Delta State, James Ibori, and of Rivers State, Peter Odili, reportedly expressed their interest in ministerial appointments directly to President Yar'Adua. Douglas thought that since Yar'Adua was colleagues with Odili and Ibori before becoming president he could not outright reject their requests, which Douglas thought

Yar'Adua was inclined to do given Odili and Ibori's level of corruption. Yar'Adua told the aspiring ministers he was not opposed to their continued government service but that they would need to first clear EFCC investigations. Douglas posited that Yar'Adua did not expect either Ibori or Odili to volunteer for EFCC investigations. Douglas further speculated this was Yar'Adua's political maneuvering to excise these two from politics--or at least from his administration. Yar'Adua is a willful and strong individual, Douglas averred, who will likely extricate himself from Obasanjo's grasp after six or seven months in office.

Jonathan Proves Loyalty As Yar'Adua Proxy

¶7. (C) President Yar'Adua and Governor Goodluck Jonathan have an agreeable relationship, Douglas said, but Jonathan needs to prove his loyalties to the President. While Jonathan is well known for his loyalty, he and Yar'Adua do not have a long history together. Jonathan has been tasked to deliver Yar'Adua's messages and to speak on his behalf at events at the University of Ibadan and while visiting the Niger Delta to look at ways to improve the region. This,

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Douglas predicted, would help Jonathan gain Yar'Adua's confidence.

Comment

¶8. (C) The upcoming summits on the Niger Delta, if they are structured so as to assure that Delta indigenes participate actively in and benefit from government efforts, could be a first step toward peace and stability in the region. However, the GON will have to follow these summits with actions to satisfy the needs of the region, a monumental and costly task. That the GON is dialoging with militants is essential; at the same time, however, it will need to take care to not inadvertently displace or ignore other Niger Deltans to avoid charges of "divide and rule" tactics often levied at the oil majors. The task of persuading militants and criminals alike to give up their arms and cease attacks on oil companies is a formidable one, but one which Jonathan, on Yar'Adua's behalf, appears to be undertaking. A scant two months into the Yar'Adua administration, the President and Vice President appear to have taken some proactive steps toward their articulated goal of resolving the Niger Delta crisis. End Comment.

Biographical Information on Oronto Douglas

¶9. (C) Oronto Douglas is considered one of Nigeria's foremost leaders in the fields of environmental and human rights law. He founded Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and supports himself through his private law firm, Community Defense Law Foundation (CDLF). Thanks to his closeness to Vice President Jonathan (they both hail from the Ogbia Ijaw community in Bayelsa State and both worked under Alamieyeseigha), Douglas actively counsels Jonathan on the Niger Delta. Douglas is well respected by human rights and civil society organizations throughout Nigeria.

¶10. (C) Douglas attended a summer study program at the University of California, Berkley in the 1990s and was invited by President Clinton to visit the White House. Douglas was the former Commissioner of Information for Bayelsa State under jailed Governor Alamieyeseigha but was relieved of his position when Alamieyeseigha was arrested in ¶2006. Douglas anticipates a "Special Advisor" or "Senior Staff" position under President Yar'Adua; if this does not occur, he will likely remain a preeminent spokesman of and

advocate for the Niger Delta.
MCCONNELL